

017 To Equip The Saints Shepherd the Flock

We are going to take a look at the New Testament style of leadership and the 21st Century style, which in all truth is a hand down from many centuries past and rooted in the Roman Catholic tradition.

In this study we are going to look at the ministry of the shepherd – the pastor. I have decided to put this study here as I trust it will help bring some clarity to the other studies in the Equipping The Saints section.

Lets take a look at Moses who was the leader of the Old Testament Congregation.

Ex 18:1-18

18:1 Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses, heard of everything God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, and how the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt.

2 After Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro received her

3 and her two sons. One son was named Gershom, for Moses said, "I have become an alien in a foreign land";

4 and the other was named Eliezer, for he said, "My father's God was my helper; he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh."

5 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, together with Moses' sons and wife, came to him in the desert, where he was camped near the mountain of God.

6 Jethro had sent word to him, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons."

7 So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. They greeted each other and then went into the tent.

8 Moses told his father-in-law about everything the Lord had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the Lord had saved them.

9 Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the Lord had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians.

10 He said, "Praise be to the Lord, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians.

11 Now I know that the Lord is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly."

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12 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law in the presence of God.

13 The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening.

14 When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?"

15 Moses answered him, "Because the people come to me to seek God's will.

16 Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and laws."

*17 Moses' father-in-law replied, "**What you are doing is not good.***

*18 You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. **The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone.***

Here we have the Old Testament picture of the one-man ministry.

Moses father-in-law told him this was not good. Verse 17.

Moses was further informed that the one-man ministry was going to destroy him and his people.

“How many people do you have in your church pastor Moses?”

“Oh about two and a half million” replied Moses.

It was impossible for Moses to tend and shepherd a congregation that size.

One cannot properly shepherd a church of thousands.

You cannot properly shepherd a church of one thousand.

Nor can you do it with hundreds or even a hundred, as the Lord requires it to be done.

A shepherd needs to know, care and be a close shepherd to his flock.

The Holy Spirit is saying the same thing to today's church as Jethro said to Moses.

This is not a good thing.

There are many thousands of ministers who have ended up with mental breakdowns, mental and physical exhaustion. Many have gone to an early grave or many months in hospital because of this man erected structure of ‘The Pastor’.

The typical pastor has to be the chief cook and bottle washer, jack of all trades, architect, builder, maintenance man, sick visitor, home visitor, instructor, marriage counselor, death counselor, perform marriage and funerals, be the evangelist, the Bible teacher, the trainer and discipler, the dispute settler, watch over the finances, create reports for the ‘church board’ (and the church board is another thing God needs to save us from), and it goes on and on. Oh by the way, he also has to be a prayer and studier and preacher, if he can find the time!

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Again the Holy Spirit is saying, “This is not a good thing”
Jesus as Head of the Church is crying out, “ This is not what I set up or called you to do”.
The Holy Spirit is saying, “you cannot do this alone, it is not the Father’s way.”

The shepherd suffers, the flock suffers, the pastor’s wife suffers, and the pastor children suffer.

It is so tragic to hear the stories of minister’s families no longer following the Lord because their pastor dad just didn’t have the time to be daddy to his own children. Bitterness and resentment has grown until suddenly they turn away.

There are many marriages among ministers that are under constant strain, as he had no time to be a true husband to his wife and tragically too many end in divorce.

This is not the Lord’s way. He never created that sort of existence for anyone. That is the result of man-made structure and it is not at all glorifying to the Lord.

Jethro showed Moses a more excellent way.

The Lord does have a way to do things. Our problem is that we say we believe the scripture is the inspired Word of God, but our problems arise when we disobey the Word and do not live by what it says.

Our challenge is if we believe it is God’s Word, we have to change our lifestyle and ways of living church. Sadly too many will not face up to the truth and abandon the traditions and unscriptural methods we have lived under for centuries.

Now the Lord does not force us to do thing His way, but he does let things take their course and we reap in our bodies and home life the results of our follies. – Then we have the audacity to plead with the Lord for healing. Something wrong here.

Let’s have a look at the Lord’s shepherding structure- The Lord’s way as laid out for us in the Scripture – His Manual.

First of all we must acknowledge who owns the flock.

Acts 20:28

*28 Keep watch over **yourselves** and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. **Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.***

Firstly, to whom was the apostle Paul talking?

Acts 20:17

*17 From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the **elders of the church.***

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It was the elders of the church in Ephesus and he warned them to be careful for **themselves first**. He realized that if they didn't watch over or be on guard for themselves, then they could not care for the flock of the Lord.

Then the second part of the first line in verse 28 above is watch over the flock. If the leader or shepherd is in a good place he can keep the sheep in a good place.

The next point that this verse brings out is who made them elders or overseers. Very clearly it states it is the Holy Spirit.

Then it goes on to say: Be **shepherds of the church of God**. Again a clear function to tend, care and feed - who? - Gods flock - His church. Now we see who owns the flock. God does. How? - **Which he bought with his own blood**. He bought the flock and holds the title to it.

1 Peter 5:1-3

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:

2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;

3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

Here the apostle Peter brings instruction from the Holy Spirit to the elders – as a fellow elder... *Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers.*

It is important here to note that the apostles and as recorded specifically, Peter, James, John, Paul and others refer to themselves as 'Elders' or Fellow Elders etc. emphasizing the fact that all in 'ministry' are firstly elders – those who care and watch over the church, the flock of the Lord.

Remember in all things, Jesus is our example.

The Good Shepherd.

John 10:11-17

*11 "I am the **Good Shepherd**. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*

12 A hired man will run when he sees a wolf coming and will leave the sheep, for they aren't his and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf leaps on them and scatters the flock.

13 The hired man runs because he is hired and has no real concern for the sheep.

14 "I am the Good Shepherd and know my own sheep, and they know me,

15 just as my Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

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16 I have other sheep, too, in another fold. I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice; and there will be one flock with one Shepherd.
17 "The Father loves me because I lay down my life that I may have it back again.
TLB

Here Jesus states that He is the **Good Shepherd**.

He then goes on to describe the difference between a good shepherd and some who is just hired to look after them. When there is trouble the one who is hired runs for his life not to be involved in the trouble.

The Good Shepherd knows His sheep and His sheep know Him. **There is a real relationship between shepherd and flock.** Yes He bought them with His own life's blood. He didn't run away, He laid His own life down for them. Total sacrifice.

The Great Shepherd

Heb 13:20

*20 May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, **that great Shepherd of the sheep.***
NIV

Because of His sacrifice on the cross for us wayward and lost sheep, God raised Him from the dead and exalted Him far above all rule and He is the **Great Shepherd**.

The Chief Shepherd

1 Peter 5:2-4

2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.
*4 And when the **Chief Shepherd** appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.*
NASB

Here we see His rightful position as the Head or Chief Shepherd entrusting His flock to the immediate care of Elders or shepherds who because of their love for Him and His sheep, because they are also family, so in a sense it is the family flock, they care and lead by example as the Chief Shepherd leads by example. Verse 3.

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It is God's flock and He has set His Son over the flock. Jesus spoke in shepherd terms.

Luke 12:32

32 "So don't be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom.

TLB

Matt 26:31

31 Then Jesus said to them, "Tonight you will all desert me. For it is written in the Scriptures that God will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.

TLB

Jesus Himself is our ultimate shepherd/pastor.

Now let's examine something else related to this.

Eph 4:1-11

*As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life **worthy of the calling** you have received.*

*2 Be completely **humble and gentle**; be **patient**, bearing with one another in love.*

*3 Make every effort to **keep the unity of the Spirit** through the bond of peace.*

*4 There is **one body and one Spirit**—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—*

5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

*7 But to **each one of us grace** has been given **as Christ apportioned it**.*

8 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men."

9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?

*10 **He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)***

*11 **It was **He** who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.***

I have put the scriptures from verse 1 to 11 and emboldened a few important points for you to notice.

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There is: -

- The Call.
- The Character.
- The Oneness
- The Involvement
- The Appointment
- The Authority of the appointer.
- The Positions.

Sadly there are those who do not believe the ministries listed in verse 11 are for today, except Evangelist, Pastor, and the Teachers.

This not only saddens me, it makes me very angry, because again they are manipulating God Precious Word to fit their own desires and religious positions.

We have seen how Paul emphasized the ultimate authority that had been given to Christ by none other than Almighty God Himself and from that place of authority and as head of the church He made His designated appointments.

These people who sift the scripture and remove things that they don't want to recognize are so arrogant as to put themselves above Christ Himself. Nowhere in scripture are any of these ministries removed or taken away.

In fact Paul writing to the people in Corinth states that Christ has **SET** them in the church.

1 Cor 12:28

*28 And **God hath set** some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*

KJV

The very ones that these ignorant people try to remove, Paul states they are SET in the church. The Greek word is **tithemi**, which is to *Set*, to *Put in Place*, to *Settle* or *Sink down*. Like one would settle or sink a post down into concrete as a fixture.

(New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright © 1994.

So if you are one of those people, sorry, you had better think again because you are in opposition the Christ the Head of the Church.

Now let's get back to our main discussion position the 'pastor'.

Let's deal with the word 'Pastor'. Unfortunately this has become a title and a status symbol to many.

The Greek word in Ephesians 4; 11 above is *poimen*, which simply and literally is "Shepherd".

New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright © 1994,

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In all other New Testament usage of the word it is translated shepherd as in Luke 2 the report of Jesus birth.

Luke 2:8

*8 And there were **shepherds** (Poimen) living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night*

So the ascended Christ as head of the church with every bit of authority that exists in the entire universe has given, set, some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers.

It is important to understand what the Lord gave to the church and what we have done with His gift. We have changed it from a servant ministry, into a name or a title. A pastor is a professional, academically trained gentleman (or woman) with a 'dog collar', robes and all the trappings who is living an almost artificial life.

The Lord has given His church shepherds - men and women gifted by the Lord in whom He the Chief Shepherd has invested Himself. We have got so bogged down that unless you go to Theological Seminary and graduate with a bachelor's degree or a doctorate you cannot be accepted into the ministry as a pastor. Fine, but there is no place in the Lord's economy for a 'professional pastor'.

He has not given "pastor's" which are the product of man's machinery. He has given shepherds as true expressions of His own heart as the Good Shepherd. These people have a ministry that is of God, *which **the Holy Spirit** has made you overseers, to **shepherd** the church of God.* Acts 20:28 NASB

It has very little to do with Theological Seminary, but it has **everything** to do with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Without the anointing you are nothing but 'hot air'.

In the New Testament books of 1st Timothy chapter 3 and Titus 1 there are about eighteen qualifications to be a shepherd or overseer. All but one – able to teach- are about Godly character, so for the Head of the Church quality of character far out ways the importance of educational qualification.

Let me interject something here. It may appear to you that I am against theological training. I am not. I myself am the product of such seminary training. But if training and discipleship is so poor or totally lacking in your own local fellowship circle, and sad to say it mostly is, because this is where it should all happen, then going to a seminary is not a bad thing if you desire to learn more and learn how to study the scripture.

But my point is, the seminary will not make you a shepherd or minister of the gospel of the Lord Jesus and you should not expect to come out of seminary and go into the 'ministry'.

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The only God appointed way into the ministry is to be called, appointed and anointed by the Holy Spirit first. Seminary can be a help with teaching you if that is lacking locally.

Will an associate's degree help you pray better or help you lead someone to Jesus – NO?

Will a bachelor's degree help you heal the sick or cast out demons – NO?

Will a PhD help you cleanse the leper – NO?

Will a doctorate help you raise the dead or open blind eyes or deaf ears – NO?

So what are we talking about? It is all the principles of the world that have overcome the church and pushed out the anointed ones.

Jesus stated “the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand” and He then went on to demonstrate the Kingdom by what he DID. He healed the sick, cleansed the leper, opened deaf ears, opened blind eyes, raised the crippled, raised the dead, so did all the disciples, so did Paul so did the people of the New Testament church and not one of them had a degree, PhD or a doctorate, but what they did have was the **anointing** and **power** of the Holy Spirit.

It is that anointing that brings the Kingdom of God to earth and **THAT** is what **Jesus commanded us to do to** demonstrate the Kingdom is here. So which church do you want? The New Testament, Christ appointed and led church or the 21st century church, which has so much man-made garbage in it?

1 Sam 8:4-7

4 So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah.

*5 They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now **appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.**"*

6 But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord.

7 And the Lord told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.

Here we have the story of when Samuel the prophet who had led Israel was now old. His sons didn't follow in his ways and so the people asked for a king **so they could be like all the other nations.**

Here was an outright rejection of doing things God's way and putting in their own system.

1 Sam 9:2

*2 His son Saul was the most handsome man in Israel. And he was **head and shoulders** taller than anyone else in the land!*

TLB

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Kish had this son Saul who was a head and shoulders man. He was made king of Israel, a sorry day.

1 Samuel 13:14

*14 But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought **out a man after his own heart** and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command."*

Because Saul disobeyed the Lord and did his own head and shoulders thing – doing it his way, God removed his kingship and leadership and David “ a man after God’s own heart”, was made king.

Saul had the qualifications but not the God like heart.

Jeremiah 3:13-15

Only acknowledge your guilt — you have rebelled against the Lord your God, you have scattered your favors to foreign gods under every spreading tree, and have not obeyed me," declares the Lord.

14 "Return, faithless people," declares the Lord, "for I am your husband. I will choose you — one from a town and two from a clan — and bring you to Zion.

*15 **Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart**, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.*

Here the priest and leaders of the people had led them astray, but God said if they **returned to Him and His ways**, He would give them shepherds after His own heart. Shepherds who had a knowledge and understanding of the Father's heart for His people. The Lord has set in the church gifted men who's hearts are after God's heart.

Phil 2:19-22

19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you.

*20 I have no one else like him, **who takes a genuine interest in your welfare.***

21 For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

22 But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.

Timothy had a genuine concern for the churches welfare. Timothy didn't have to be prodded and pushed and taught how to be a shepherd, it was apparent by the way he cared and had proved his shepherding heart as a son to Paul.

The thing we have to learn is not to organize, but to recognize ministry gifting and anointing.

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So, God the Father has purchased a flock through the sacrificed blood of His Son and the Lord Jesus as the Chief Shepherd of the flock has gifted Himself into men and given shepherds to His body, His flock.

We have this beautiful shepherding structure in the church universal. All over the world there are shepherds tending to the flock of God.

Then we have the local situation. Paul called to him the elders of the city of Ephesus. Paul says to Titus

“ The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. Titus 1:5

You see the New Testament gives us a very different picture of what is in God’s heart, to what we have actually made it.

- The Church Universal
- The Church in the City
- The Church in the Home

There is no national church or denominational structured church in the New Testament.

The other serious point shown in the New Testament is the ‘plurality’ of leadership. Apart from a personal reference, the word ‘elders’ is always plural – more than one.

It is very significant to note that the Lord Himself only worked with a small group of twelve disciples. When the Lord sent his disciples out on a mission trip He sent them in two’s.

Mark 6:7

*7 Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out **two by two** and gave them authority over evil spirits.*

We then have the accounts of the apostle Paul who at this time was still called Saul.

Acts 13:2

*While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me **Barnabas and Saul** for the work to which I have called them."*

We also read throughout the accounts of Paul’s ministry that he always had a company of people with him.

Acts 16:6

*6 Paul **and his companions** traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.*

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Acts 19:22

*22 He sent **two of his helpers**, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.*

Acts 20:4

4 He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia.

The apostle Peter too ministered with companions.

Acts 8:14

*14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent **Peter and John** to them.*

Acts 10:23

Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests. The next day Peter

As you look throughout the New Testament, you find to some measure or other, the Jethro principle in operation. Jesus, Peter, John, Paul, all ministered with and to a small number of people discipling them in the ways of the Lord.

Thus when the need arose and the time was right they were able to leave one or two of their disciples in these new church communities to carry on the ministry.

Phil 2:25-30

25 But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs.

26 For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill.

27 Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.

28 Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety.

29 Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him,

30 because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.

The whole focus of the ministry was relationship built on relationship out of which ministry flowed. In most of today's church life it is ministry and hopefully a relationship grows.

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If one follows the examples of the New Testament then we should all be shepherded and cared for in a small group of around ten to fifteen people by shepherds or if you must 'pastors'. So a church of 200 hundred people should have 15 to 20 shepherds – that's if you want to be a New Testament type church.

The point is that church life and experience has shown us that some folks who lead a church group of twelve people, enable those folks under their care to come alive in their every day walk and Christian life, but put that person as the leader of the 200 and they kill the whole thing.

It is a case of humble recognition of what and who Christ has made you to be and the sphere of effective influence He has allotted to you.

Again the problem is we have let the world's measurement of success infiltrate the church. The higher up the totem pole you climb the greater your apparent success. So now we have so called ministers clambering for recognition and status positions.

I met a 'minister' a few weeks ago. I was introduced to him, he knew who I was and as I shook hands he introduced himself "Hello Bob I am pastor so and so". He then proceeded for the next three minutes, which seemed like ten, to tell me all the ministry things he did and drop as many 'names' as he could and finally tells me that he ordains apostles.

Funny, I thought that was Jesus job!

A little man desiring and probably needing any recognition he could find, as he had not been brought up in the safety and security of the New Testament way, which so happens to be the Lord set way. It was and is so sad to me.

One of the greatest privileges in the Kingdom of God is to care and be a shepherd to the Lord's flock. There are those who can do it so well but under much of the "21st century church structure" you cannot do it unless you have a degree in something, or you are seen as a threat to the leader of the church, or the local constitution or by-laws don't make room for it.

The truth is, you have not been discipled and then released into your gifting and calling, probably because the leader or leaders don't know how. So the Kingdom of God suffers because we are too much like king Saul of old 'head and shoulders' people and not king David people 'after God's own heart'.

Let me say this one thing here. There are people called and anointed to be part of a leadership team to lead the 200 plus strong churches who make terrible small group shepherds. It's all about gifting and sphere of anointing.

See you next study.